

The French Doctor's Angel.

By FRANKLIN HALE AUSTIN.

"I can never marry him, Mamma. Never!"

"But you must my child," said the mother as she tucked another piece of straw in the mat she was braiding. "You are now passed sixteen years of age, and it is high time you were married."

"But mamma, I hate him. Oh, how I hate him!"

"You will get over that when he has given you a lot of pretty new *haole* dresses and *holokus*. You will find he will be very good to you."

Maeli did not wail and weep as many a white maiden would have done under the circumstances. But in her despair she stopped stringing flowers on the wreath she was making and resting her plump round cheek in the smallest and prettiest of dimpled hands set her simple mind to thinking. The silence was unbroken for some time. Then Maeli said: "Mamma, doesn't the religion of the *haole* (whites), that they teach us every Sunday, say that if one prays to God with great faith he will answer the prayer."

"Yes, my child."

"Well, Mamma, Kane will not come again for three days. I want to pray the Good God to send me a husband."

The mother paused in her work: "That is a hard test to give the *haole* religion. How are you to know that your prayers are answered if a man does come."

"If a man comes and without my saying anything to him he takes notice of me and kisses me then he is the one sent to take me away from you and Kane and make me happy."

After some consideration the mother replied: "You may try it, Maeli. If the Good God does send a man to take you away I could not object, because He knows better than I what is best for you."

Two days later the *Kauka Palani* (French Doctor) as he was known by the natives, called to see Maeli's little sister who was sick. Maeli was sitting on the veranda employed in her usual occupation of stringing flowers into wreaths, from the sale of which her mother derived considerable profit. She was very sweet and pretty in her fresh white mother hubbard gown or *holoku*, surrounded as she was with yellow, white, pink and red wreaths and flowers.

After visiting the sick room the doctor and Maeli's mother came out upon the veranda. The *Kauka Palani* was a very austere man and was reputed to be a woman hater, but he could not help pausing to admire the beautiful picture before him. What a subject for an artist, he thought. Yet who could reproduce the color of that transparent, velvety, nut-brown skin with the faintest olive green tint suffusing it.

"Maeli has grown to be a very pretty girl," said the doctor.

"Upon being noticed, Maeli arose from the floor among her flowers, and standing on tiptoe tied the wreath she had just finished around the doctor's neck, as was the custom of her people.

"I am not much given to wearing flowers, my girl, but I will wear this for a while to please you, and I think you deserve a kiss."

Instantly the girl's arms were clinging around his neck. "Mamma, Mamma," she cried, "it is the sign. He is the one God has sent."

The doctor looked inquiringly from one to the other, and as the mother explained what had passed between Maeli and herself, his iron-clad cynical face seemed to break up, as it were, moved by the most powerful emotion. He involuntarily drew the girl closer to him, then almost roughly pushed her away and in a hard, dry tone of voice commanded:

"Maeli, go saddle your horse;" and to the mother, "Go and get the girl's things and put them in my saddle bags. I will take her with me." He then muttered to himself in French: "She will love me until death. I did not realize how hungry my heart is for woman's love."

Dr. Lousseau was understood to be a man with a story, but none had been able to penetrate the veiled mystery of his past. Even

the most charming of his lady patients could not surprise him into speaking of himself. Yet, what would not the matrons of Honolulu society have given to know that story. He was very erratic and after attending to the duties of his profession for a year or two would suddenly and without warning abandon the most lucrative practice and retire to his lonely sheep ranch on Mauna Loa, severing all connections with society and the companionship of his fellow men.

During the monarchy, there were two very distinct circles of society in Honolulu. One circle was virtuous, proud, exclusively good and God-fearing. The point around which it circled was Central Union Church. The other circle was very fast, and the central point around which it radiated was the Palace.

There were occasions, occurring about twice a year, when these amiable, though antagonistic circles of society buried the hatchet. These occasions were King Kalakaua's state balls at the Palace. With great impartiality, as truly became a King, he distributed his invitations alike to both social circles. The King was a past master in Bohemia and high in the degree of being exquisitely fast. But on these occasions he assumed the Royal dignity becoming the majesty of his high station and circle No. 1 graciously unbent in recognition of this effort at conventionality, while circle No. 2 was on its best behavior in the presence of so much virtue.

The doctor's recent return to civilization and the duties of his profession had created an unusual sensation. It chanced to be Mrs. Lucy Tristian's day at home. This matron had the reputation of being the most virtuous champion of rectitude in the whole of Honolulu. Mrs. Bella Long, her friend and partner in noble effort, had called late that she might have a quiet gossip with Mrs. Tristian.

"Bella, our doctor has become common, like any other adventurer who comes here," cried Mrs. Tristian in virtuous indignation.

"I suppose you refer to his recently acquired enamorata," purred Mrs. Long.

"Yes. It is bad enough for him to smoke his vile cigarettes when he comes to see me. I suppose he has rolled and smoked one of those nasty French cigarettes in nearly every lady's bed chamber before he would even feel her pulse. I told him one day that smoking made me deathly sick. He coolly replied that it was quite fortunate as his bill would be larger. But this could be forgiven. He was so grand in his contempt for women, and although he treated us like so many cattle, he was never common. But now—Ugh!" and the regulator of morals shuddered. "And to think that the King has decorated him and appointed him court physician. It seems like a premium on sin."

"Oh, how interesting," giggled Mrs. Nellie Swing, who had not gone yet. Mrs. Swing was known to seek the society of Circle No. 2 oftener than could be approved of, but being the daughter of a minister in the States she had to be tolerated.

"Interesting! Do you call wickedness and sin interesting? Nellie, I am ashamed of you," and Nellie subsided.

"What can we do about it, Lucie?" asked Mrs. Long quietly.

"We must organize, Bella—organize. Make the ladies of our set agree to cut him dead and refuse to call him when ill."

"But," chirped in Nellie Swing, "perhaps the poor doctor has had some trouble that would excuse what seems to you so bad. Many people think so."

"Excuse for wickedness!" cried Mrs. Tristian in sheer exasperation. "There can be no compromise with sin. What has become of your early training, Nellie?"

"Calm yourself, Lucy," purred Bella Long. "I feel as badly about this as you do. But stop and think a moment. You are very frequently prostrated with your various ailments. Dr. Lousseau knows you like a book, and can get you on your feet in half the time any other physician can. Now you know, Lucy, you will be the first to break the agreement and send for him, making yourself the laughing-stock of Honolulu."

"Yes, Bella, I am afraid I should," sighed Lucy Tristian, "but I am sure I shall have nervous prostration if he touches me."

"That would be quite fortunate" giggled Nellie Swing, "the